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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Civil Rights Lawsuits Filed Against Two Colorado City Businesses

(Phoenix, Ariz. – June 14, 2007) The Arizona Attorney General's Office today filed separate civil rights lawsuits against the Vermillion Candy Shoppe ("Vermillion") and Big Dan's Drive Thru and their owners and operators. Both businesses are located in Colorado City, Arizona.

The lawsuits are the result of two investigations completed by the Office's Civil Rights Division, which concluded there is reasonable cause to believe the businesses refused to serve Isaac Wyler, Andrew Chatwin and other former members of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (FLDS) because of religion in violation of the Arizona Civil Rights Act.

According to the State's Complaint, in July 2006, Daniel Porter Steed, owner of Big Dan's Drive Thru, refused service to Wyler, Chatwin and Chatwin's wife and asked them to leave the restaurant. Wyler was one of more than 20 men ex-communicated from the FLDS by Warren Jeffs in January 2004.

In the second lawsuit, the Attorney General's Office alleges that in April 2006, staff at the Vermillion Candy Shoppe told Chatwin, Wyler and other former FLDS members that no more food was available and asked them to leave the restaurant. This happened after members of the group had already paid for their meals. When the group protested, stating they had already paid, food was brought out in "to go" boxes, and they were again asked to leave.

According to court documents, Chatwin and Wyler attempted to go back to Vermillion at a later date, and a restaurant employee called the Colorado City Deputy Marshalls to escort them out of the restaurant. Vermillion is owned by FLDS member Bygnal Dutson.

The State is seeking monetary damages and civil penalties and a court order prohibiting the restaurants from engaging in discriminatory conduct.

The Arizona Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination based on a person's disability, race, color, religion, sex, familial status or national origin. If you believe you are a victim of discrimination, please contact the Attorney General's Office, Civil Rights Division, in Phoenix at 602-542-5263 or in Tucson at 520-628-6500. To file a complaint in person, the Attorney General's Office has 32 satellite offices throughout Arizona with volunteers available to help. Locations and hours of operation are posted on the Attorney General's Web site at www.azag.gov.

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